

# **Scale Free Flight Brief 104 October 2025**

## **Scale Free Flight Season Round Up**

The outdoor 2025 scale free flight season has just about finished bar the odd good weather day.

Speaking of the weather, we have had some extremes. All the Lodge Farm meetings were cancelled due to high winds. On the other hand, we've been blessed with almost flat calm at the two Sculthorpe meetings in conjunction with the FFTC and both days at the SAM35 Autumn Gala.

Not what we can do about the weather but at least the weather forecasts are reasonably accurate to the point where we can send out Go / No Go emails a couple of days beforehand. Hopefully negating a wasted journey.

Competition entry levels are lower than desired but we managed to make the most of it. Four entries in the Superscale contest at the Nats competed in windy conditions but being the Nats the "hard men" gave it a brave go. This contest is now an all-in-one power type contest to try and ensure we have a Superscale National Champion. Since the covid pandemic it has proved very difficult to have viable contests in individual power sources i.e. Power, Rubber and Co2/ Electric and we have gaps where there were not enough entries to call a National Champion.

Along with this change we have made the FF2 Scale Free Flight contest at the Nats, or alternative suitable venue, a National Championship class. This class is the old Flying Only class updated to include a pre-flight assessment, without documentation, for workmanship and realism. This assessment represents 10% of the maximum flight score. The aim is to encourage potential new and returnee competitors without over complicating the class and at the same time give a good scale model it's due with a modest score over the wreck of the contest that flies well.

Do we include in the rules the need to provide one photograph of the subject modelled to enable judges to assess realism?

Is the 10% assessment mark enough?

Scale entries at the SAM Autumn Gala were good in both the SAM Radio contest on Saturday and the BMFA FF2 Scale Free Flight on Sunday with eight models entered. A lot more scale models were sport flying.

There was also the SAM 35 rubber powered scale Masefield Trophy contest on Sunday. With a little organisation between the STC and SAM35 we could align the two contests so one runs before the other so contestants can enter both. "Double Bubble!". Ten entries in each class would be very respectable and encouraging.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage Scale Free Flight modellers to take up membership of SAM35. We are very like minded and the liaison between us over the last couple of seasons is proving to be advantageous in many respects. The fee is quite modest and provides a very good magazine, SAM35 Speaks, published on a monthly basis.

I am playing Billy-no-mates at present with the new FF5 Assisted Scale Free Flight class but I appreciate that it may take time for potential competitors to build or convert a model. My proof-of-concept models, Sopwith Snipe, HP O400 and Fokker DVIII have been developed to be very flyable, particularly on smaller venues. Let the model free flight and then tweak it round the corners to keep it in the field and I have some discretion on landing direction. Best of both worlds I can argue.

The "Gods" seem to have been against us somewhat recently with Covid resulting in aeromodellers losing the habit and routine of having a go at contesting or even going to meetings. The loss of Barkston Heath and the all-in-one Radio Nationals as well as the Free Flight Nationals. The loss of the three Old Warden meetings. The ageing demographic of

aeromodellers and the electronic saturation of the younger generations is not helping. Having said all that, there seems to be an underlying positive optimism about Scale Free Flight. Modellers seem to be getting back to the habit after a very rough and frustrating period. We have been very active with various liaisons with different branches of the sport. No point bemoaning the losses we will have to get on with it and make the most of what we have. We are actively seeking and have a mutually beneficial collaboration with the Free Flight Technical Committee to fly at their meeting and the same with SAM35, the Peterborough MFC and the Oxford MFC.

The National Centre at Buckminster is evolving at a pace and is very positive towards Scale. It is more than doable to fly scale free flight at Buckminster if the wind speed is low. One just has to be mindful of the venue size and adjust engine/motor run to suit. Scale Free Flight contests now have a 15 second qualifying time to allow models to record a score with a reduced flight time. We are not looking for a three-minute Max. The camping, parking, indoor facilities, toilets and above all the Café on the busy days to sup tea and eat bacon sandwiches if one is marooned on the ground, make it a very civilised place to spend the day.

Indoor scale flying is quite buoyant at the present as the busy 2025 Indoor Scale Nats proved. The Scale Technical Committee have started meetings to organise the 2026 RC and FF Nats that will be held on April 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> at the Wolverhampton University Sports Centre with a similar format as the past couple of years.

Would you like to be part of the event on either or both days? We are currently seeking anyone that would be prepared to help out on a general basis as front of house meeters and greeters, raffle and general sales, lifters and shifters. You name it. Do let me know.

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It was good to see a number of indoor modellers attending outdoor meetings when the weather conditions were suitable with their indoor models. Slow and low, a joy to see. Indoor modellers are welcome to outdoor events. Please join in and help keep the entry numbers up.

The Scale Free Flight Calendar for 2026 has never been so full.

We have the chance of a lifetime with the Scale World Championships coming to Buckminster in July next year.

I'm exhausted thinking about it all.

The shoots of positivity are springing up all over. Just need the weather to cooperate,